canceled, and no new claims have been added. Therefore, claims 1-17, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 25-29 are pending in this application.
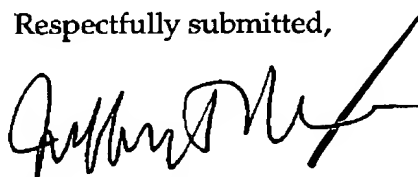
2.   A telephonic interview was held on March 6, 2003 between Mr. Klayman, Examiner Stimpak, and Supervisory Patent Examiner Hafiz during which was discussed the office action response of January 23, 2003, and, in particular the claim amendments and the prior art of record, namely Puram and CareerMosaic. Mr. Klayman argued that the pending claims were allowable over on grounds that Puram in essence teaches a unilateral analysis in which the skills of the contractor are matched to the needs of the employer without regard to whether the employer is a good match for a particular contractor, particularly where skill levels provided by the candidates are normalized to maximum scores provided by the employer without any normalization of the employer maximum scores to the contractor skill levels. The Examiner argued that Puram includes an element by which the contractors can provide "preferences" that are matched to the job description provided by the employer, and so argued that Puram shows a bilateral analysis because there is normalization of the contractor skill levels to the employer maximum scores as well as a matching of contractor "preferences" with the job description. Mr. Klayman disagreed that this is bilateral analysis as taught in the subject application because, among other things, the "preferences" provided by the contractors related to different categories than those involved in the normalization and so the Puram analysis is not "bilateral" as in the subject application. The Examiner agreed in principle that there may in fact be a difference between the bilateral/multilateral analysis of the subject application and the analysis taught by Puram, but felt that the claims did not sufficiently distinguish over Puram. The Examiner indicated that the pending claims would be rejected, but provided an opportunity for a supplemental amendment to be submitted. The type of claim amendments being made in this supplemental amendment were discussed briefly as a way to distinguish over Puram, although

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Examiner Hafiz indicated that he would only make a final decision upon receiving the supplemental amendment with the actual claim amendments.

3.   In claims 1, 2, 22, 23, 25, and 29 as amended, the various preference profiles are derived from the responses of the various parties and counterparties, and the preference profiles are analyzed using a bilateral/multilateral analysis so that the preferences of the party closely match the preferences of the counterparty and the preferences of the counterparty closely match the preferences of the party. Among other things, the bilateral/multilateral analysis provides for better matching of parties and counterparties compared to, for example, Puram, because the analysis takes into account both how closely the preferences of each counterparty match the preferences of a particular party and how closely the preferences of the party match the preferences of each counterparty. Applicant respectfully submits that neither Puram alone, nor Puram in combination with CareerMosaic, teach or otherwise suggest the derivation of the preference profiles from the responses and the bilateral/multilateral analysis as claimed.

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4.   Claims 1-17, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 25-29 are pending in this application. All pending claims are believed to be in a form suitable for allowance. Therefore, the application is believed to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully requests early allowance of the application. The Applicant requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned, Jeffrey T. Klayman, if it will assist further examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marked up version of amended claims

1.   (Twice amended)   A method for facilitating evaluation, in connection with the procurement or delivery of products or services, in at least one of (i) a potential financial transaction and (ii) operation of an enterprise, each context involving a member of a first class of parties in a first role and a member of a second class of counterparties in a second role, the method comprising:

     a.   obtaining for each of the parties in the first class and storing in a first digital storage medium responses from at least one of the party and a party co-evaluator to a first set of questions intended to reveal party preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such party's fit with a counterparty in such context;

     b.   obtaining for each of the counterparties in the second class and storing in a second digital storage medium responses from at least one of the counterparty and a counterparty co-evaluator to a second set of questions intended to reveal counterparty preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such counterparty's fit with a party in such context;

     c.   deriving, in a first computer process, from the responses to the first set of questions for each such party, a first preference profile for each such party;

     d.   deriving, in a second computer process, from the responses to the second set of questions for each such counterparty, a second preference profile for each such counterparty;

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e.   for each party, analyzing, in a third computer process, the

preference profile of such party in relation to the preference profiles of the

counterparties to derive a first list of counterparties [**providing a relatively close**

fit between the preferences of each potential pairing of party and

counterparty] <u>for which the preferences of the party closely match the</u>

<u>preferences of the counterparty and the preferences of the counterparty closely</u>

<u>match the preferences of the party</u> and communicating the first list to such

party.

2.   (Twice amended)   A method according to claim 1, further comprising;

for each counterparty, analyzing, in a fourth computer process, the preference

profile of such counterparty in relation to the preference profiles of the parties to

derive a second list of parties [**providing a relatively close fit between the**

preferences of each potential pairing of party and counterparty] <u>for which the</u>

<u>preferences of the party closely match the preferences of the counterparty and</u>

<u>the preferences of the counterparty closely match the preferences of the party</u>

and communicating the second list to such counterparty.

22.   (Twice amended)   An apparatus for facilitating evaluation, in connection

with the procurement or delivery of products or services, in at least one of (i) a

potential financial transaction and (ii) operation of an enterprise, each context

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involving a member of a first class of parties in a first role and a member of a

second class of counterparties in a second role, the apparatus comprising:

a.   a first computer process, in communication with a first digital

storage medium, for obtaining for each of the parties in the first class and storing

in the first digital storage medium responses from at least one of the party and a

party co-evaluator to a first set of questions intended to reveal party preferences

that can be used to estimate the closeness of such party's fit with a counterparty

in such context;

b.   a second computer process, in communication with a second digital

storage medium, for obtaining for each of the counterparties in the second class

and storing in the second digital storage medium responses from at least one of

the counterparty and a counterparty co-evaluator to a second set of questions

intended to reveal counterparty preferences that can be used to estimate the

closeness of such counterparty's fit with a party such context;

c.   a third computer process for deriving from the responses to the first

set of questions for each such party a first preference profile for each such party;

d.   a fourth computer process for deriving from the responses to the

second set of questions for each such counterparty a second preference profile for

each such counterparty; and

e.   a fifth computer process for analyzing the preference profile of each

party in relation to the preference profiles of the counterparties to derive a list of

counterparties [providing a relatively close fit between the preferences of each

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potential pairing of party and counterparty] <u>for which the preferences f the party closely match the preferences of the counterparty and the preferences of the counterparty closely match the preferences of the party,</u> and communicating the list to such party.

23.   (Amended)   An apparatus for facilitating evaluation, in connection with the procurement or delivery of products or services in at least one of (i) a potential financial transaction and (ii) operation of an enterprise, each context involving a member of a first class of parties in a first role and a member of a second class of counterparties in a second role, the apparatus comprising:

a.   a first question and response module, in communication with a first digital storage medium, for obtaining for each of the parties in the first class and storing in the first digital storage medium responses from at least one of the party and a party co-evaluator to a first set of questions intended to reveal party preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such party's fit with a counterparty in such context;

b.   a second question and response module, in communication with a second digital storage medium, for obtaining for each of the counterparties in the second class and storing in the second digital storage medium responses from at least one of the counterparty and a counterparty co-evaluator to a second set of questions intended to reveal counterparty preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such counterparty's fit with a party in such context;

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c.   a first profile processor for deriving from the responses to the first

set of questions for each such party a first preference profile for each such party;

d.   a second profile processor for deriving from the responses to the

second set of questions for each such counterparty a second preference profile for

each such counterparty; and

e.   a closeness-of-fit analyzer for analyzing the preference profile of

each party in relation to the preference profiles of the counterparties to derive a

list of counterparties [**providing a relatively close fit between the preferences of**

each potential pairing of party and counterparty] <u>**for which the preferences of**</u>

<u>**the party closely match the preferences of the counterparty and the preferences**</u>

<u>**of the counterparty closely match the preferences of the party**</u>, and

communicating the list to such party.

25.   (Amended)   A method of structuring a database to facilitate evaluation,

in connection with the procurement or delivery of products or services, in at least

one of (i) a potential financial transaction and (ii) operation of an enterprise, each

context involving a member of a first class of parties in a first role and a member

of a second class of counterparties in a second role, the method comprising:

a.   obtaining for each of the parties in the first class and storing in a first

data record in a first digital storage medium responses from at least one of the

party and a party co-evaluator to a first set of questions intended to reveal party

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preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such party's fit with a counterparty in such context;

b.   obtaining for each of the counterparties in the second class and storing in a second data record in a second digital storage medium responses from at least one of the counterparty and a counterparty co-evaluator to a second set of questions intended to reveal counterparty preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such counterparty's fit with a party in such context;

c.   deriving, in a first computer process, from the responses to the first set of questions for each such party a first preference profile for each such party, and storing the first preference profile in a third data record in a third digital storage medium;

d.   deriving, in a second computer process, from the responses to the second set of questions for each such counterparty a second preference profile for each such counterparty, and storing the second preference profile in a fourth data record in a fourth digital storage medium;

e.   for each party, analyzing, in a third computer process, the preference profile of such party in relation to the preference profiles of the counterparties to derive a first list of counterparties [**providing a relatively close fit between the preferences of each potential pairing of party and counterparty**] <u>for which the preferences of the party closely match the preferences of the counterparty and the preferences of the counterparty closely</u>

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match the preferences of the party and storing the first list in a fifth data record in a fifth digital storage medium.

29.   (Amended) An apparatus for structuring a database, in connection with the procurement or delivery of products or services, in at least one of (i) a potential financial transaction and (ii) operation of an enterprise, each context involving a member of a first class of parties in a first role and a member of a second class of counterparties in a second role, the apparatus comprising:

   a.   a first question and response module, in communication with a first digital storage medium, for obtaining for each of the parties in the first class and storing in a first data record in the first digital storage medium responses from at least one of the party and a party co-evaluator to a first set of questions intended to reveal party preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such party's fit with a counterparty in such context;

   b.   a second question and response module, in communication with a second digital storage medium, for obtaining for each of the counterparties in the second class and storing in a second data record in the second digital storage medium responses from at least one of the counterparty and a counterparty co-evaluator to a second set of questions intended to reveal counterparty preferences that can be used to estimate the closeness of such counterparty's fit with a party in such context;

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c.   a first profile processor for deriving from the responses to the first

set of questions for each such party a first preference profile for each such party,

and storing the first preference profile in a third data record in a third digital

storage medium;

d.   a second profile processor for deriving from the responses to the

second set of questions for each such counterparty a second preference profile for

each such counterparty, and storing the second preference profile in a fourth

data record in a fourth digital storage medium; and

e.   a closeness-of-fit analyzer for analyzing the preference profile of

each party in relation to the preference profiles of the counterparties to derive a

list of counterparties [providing a relatively close fit between the preferences of

each potential pairing of party and counterparty] for which the preferences of

the party closely match the preferences of the counterparty and the preferences

of the counterparty closely match the preferences of the party, and storing the

list in a fifth data record in a fifth digital storage medium.